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SUBJECT: KABILA'S QUIET KISANGANI VISIT

1. (SBU) Summary: On January 3, President Kabila arrived in Kisangani, Province Orientale with little fanfare or advance notice. On January 5, Kabila met with several Ituri warlords scheduled to become FARDC brigadier generals. The President appears to be inspecting the new FARDC forward operations base, and meeting with FARDC and GSSP troops. Kabila's second visit to eastern DRC since becoming President has, encouragingly, been a relative non-event. End Summary.

2. (SBU) On January 3, President Kabila arrived in Kisangani in time for the national 'Day of Martyrs' on January 4. (Note: Kisangani is known as the "City of Martyrs" due to its residents' suffering during the war. End note.). Kabila's second trip to eastern DRC since becoming president was marked by little fanfare or advance notice. According to a local source, no additional presidential guard (GSSP) troops were deployed, the President had not made any public statements, and one wouldn't even know the President was there-- a marked contrast to Kabila's October 2004 trip.

3. (SBU) On October 4, Kabila reportedly visited Walikale via helicopter to visit FARDC troops and then drove 30km outside of Kisangani. The local source said that Kabila's Kisangani agenda included meeting with FARDC troops, following up on public works projects, and possibly examining some of the tensions between the GSSP and the FARDC.

4. (U) On January 5, Kabila met with four of the five Ituri warlords scheduled to become FARDC brigadier generals in the near future. Bosco Ntanga, Chief of Staff of Thomas Lubanga's UPC, was notably absent. A UPC spokesman said Bosco was too ill to travel, and was not "ignoring the call" of the President. (Note: Bosco was reportedly injured in recent fighting between the UPC and FNI in Langu. End note.)

Comment

5. (SBU) At first glance, Kabila appears to be inspecting the new FARDC forward operations base, and meeting with FARDC and GSSP troops. So far, the most notable aspect of Kabila's second trip to the east since becoming President is its seemingly relaxed, "normal" nature in a country where the head of state was unable to visit half of the nation in his first years in office.

6. (U) Bujumbura minimize considered.
MEECE